

Cedar River Instream Flow Commission

Final Minutes

SPU Water Quality Lab

May 5th, 2010

Organizations/Members Present:

- Seattle Public Utilities -- Tom Fox, Rand Little, Karl Burton
- King County Dept. of Natural Resources and Parks -- Steve Hirschey
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers -- Larry Schick, Lynne Melder
- US Fish and Wildlife Service -- Tim Romanski
- Seattle City Light-- Liz Ablow
- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe -- Holly Coccoli
- Washington Department of Ecology -- Jay Cook
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife -- Mark Hunter

Guest: Roger Peters (US Fish and Wildlife Service)

-
- I. Call to Order:** Tom Fox called the meeting to order at 9:40 AM.
 - II. Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved as presented.
 - III. Approval of Draft Minutes:** Lynne e-mailed a change to the notes to Rand and asked for a little more time for Ken Brettmann to review the minutes. Rand said he would make the change and provide some time for Ken to submit any changes he would like. Jay also said he would like to change the wording of the news and notes section by ending the first sentence after “to drill replacement wells”. Rand said he would make the change and after Ken’s comments were received and addressed, the notes would then be final.
 - IV. News and Notes:** Tom announced the completion of the annual compliance report and notified the IFC that it would be distributed soon. This year, the report took longer to write because of the Walsh Creek realignment and the resulting changes in flow compliance targets that had to be described carefully and accurately for the gage below the diversion.

Lynne mentioned that some staff at the Corps had attended the county's workshop for reclaimed water. The county was interested in finding out how the Corps would use additional water available via reclaimed water. Lynne said that one way to use such water would be to prolong the use of smolt flumes into the summer. Holly said that there are many issues to sort out in terms of water quality, temperature and where and when water would be delivered.

The new Director of DOE, Ted Sturtevant, has recently scheduled a tour of Lake Sammamish to discuss water supply management.

The Department of Health ruling regarding grey water usage will be out soon.

Tom briefly mentioned that the Bullitt Foundation is building a self-contained "off-the-grid" building that attempts to meet its water, wastewater and energy needs on site.

V. Real Time Water Management:

Hydrologic Conditions for Tolt and Cedar: Tom indicated that hydrologic conditions were looking much better. Total precipitation for April was near average. Currently, Chester Morse Reservoir is at 1562.5' and will soon be releasing water to make room for snowmelt. Reservoir inflows were quite high during the weekend rainstorm. On Sunday night, inflows to the reservoir were above 1500 cfs but SPU did not release water because flows downstream were also high (1200 cfs at Renton) and releasing water could have created the potential for scour. SPU will begin releasing an artificial freshet today with an additional 600 cfs raising instream flows below Landsburg to approximately 1100 cfs. After a few days, SPU will slowly reduce releases in an attempt to mimic a natural decline in flows. It is hoped that the operation will allow SPU to release water while discouraging spring spawning salmonids from producing redds while flows are high.

Currently, Taylor Creek above Landsburg is causing turbidity problems and SPU is not diverting water. However, the turbidity is abating and SPU expects to begin diverting again soon. Lake Youngs has an ongoing algae bloom and SPU is using the bypass to move water to the treatment plant directly without routing it through Lake Youngs. Tim asked whether Taylor Creek has a landslide and Rand responded that Taylor Creek had been a major turbidity source for a long time due in part to past logging and also due to landslides that occurred during the January 2009 storm.

The 8-week moving average for reservoir inflows is approaching the 50 percentile level and cumulative snowpack for 2010 is moving towards the average for this time of year. Currently, the combined upper Cedar Basin is registering 75% of normal and the Rex Snotel site is registering 110% of normal snowpack. Taken together,

the Tolt and Cedar River Basins are registering 74% of normal snowpack but with cooler than average weather, that statistic should go up over the next few days. Flow compliance targets including guaranteed flows and downramping rates were met over the last month. As a result of reservoir refill operations, estimated unregulated flows have been higher than actual flows since early March. Water consumption is registering around 105-106 MGD and is slightly below the cumulative consumption line for 2009.

SEAFM model runs indicate that the reservoir will refill to 1563' even if the area receives a one in twenty dry spring. Tom hopes that weather conditions will allow the refilled reservoir to hold until at least June 15th but perhaps longer if the early summer is cooler than normal. Tom expects stream flows below Landsburg are likely to be substantially above the guaranteed minimum levels much of the time through June with baseflows unlikely to be reached until early July.

Lake Washington: Lynne reported that the current lake elevation is 20.85'. Currently, the Corps is spilling 400 cfs through the flumes and spillway 5. Flume operations will continue through May but continued flume spill into June will depend on the weather and inflows to the lake. The Corps expects the lake elevation to be between 21.95' and 22' by the end of May.

The Corps is performing a rehabilitation study for Locks facility including the intake gates on the large locks. The electrical and mechanical systems on these gates are from the early 1900's and they need to be replaced. The Corps will complete a project management plan (PMP) as part of the study. The PMP will outline the risks of not replacing the gates and the best alternatives for replacement. The plan will be released in September.

Fish Update: Karl reported that he and Dave Smith from WDFW had identified 32 trout redds and one steelhead redd in the Cedar River to date. Rand reported that the wet weather in late April allowed SPU to protect the coho redds above Landsburg that were vulnerable to dewatering. WDFW trap staff provided a preliminary projection that approximately 10 million sockeye fry will emigrate from the river this year. The hatchery released approximately 4.4 million fry near the mouth of the river this year. Chinook outmigrant numbers have been relatively robust for this time of year and some Chinook juveniles have been outmigrating to the lake during the day. We will still have to wait to see how many of the larger, river-reared juveniles emigrate in May and June.

Forecasts and Water Supply Outlook: Larry said that the weather would be changing in the next 5 to 7 days and snowmelt would begin in earnest with the warmer weather. Larry expects spotty rain today with warmer temperatures and sun for Thursday and Friday. Saturday and Sunday will continue to be warm and dry

whereas, Monday will see some shower activity. Next week, Tuesday and Wednesday are expected to be warm and dry. Larry reiterated that the snowpack is ripe and the warm weather should noticeably accelerate melt off. By summer, El Nino is expected to have transitioned into a more neutral pattern, which is expected to last through the fall and winter months.

Larry reported that Howard Hansen Dam is still filling to the target elevation of 1167' but it will likely be full by the weekend. The Corps may fill beyond 1167' to test the right abutment. If the reservoir does fill beyond 1167', the Corps will only hold it there for about a week for the tests. Tim asked how the Corps will release the extra water. Larry responded that the Corps may need to release the water quickly depending on the results of the tests. Holly expressed the Tribe's concerns about steelhead spawning high in the channel if the flows are kept unusually high during the spawning period.

Rand reminded the IFC that the June meeting will include a discussion and vote regarding the supplemental blocks of water and flow allocation plan.

Liz reported that a generator at Cedar Falls tripped offline. The KV line had already tripped offline, which resulted in a plant black out. With the recently upgraded DC station/inverter that provides back up power to the plant systems, the emergency bypass system was still able to engage properly providing matching flow to the river.

VI. Supplemental Studies:

Juvenile Chinook Rearing Habitat Study: Roger Peters presented results to date from his study regarding meso-habitat selection by Chinook salmon juveniles in the Cedar River. The study covers a multi scale assessment for stream rearing habitats including micro, meso and macro scales. Micro-habitat results were discussed with the IFC previously and have been reported as Chapters 2 and 3 of the developing report. Roger provided a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the methodologies employed and the results of the juvenile Chinook meso- and macro-habitat selection investigations. Roger will provide a pdf copy of the presentation for Rand to distribute to the IFC.

IHA Investigations: Rand distributed for IFC review a draft outline for a proposed report summarizing the Cedar River IHA investigations. He will provide an electronic copy of the outline along with Roger's presentation.

VII. Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

- 1) Discussion of funding sources and reallocation of HCP funds.
- 2) Supplemental flow allocation plan.

- 3) Further discussion of draft IHA report outline.

VIII. Meeting adjourned at 12:45 PM